

LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

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The Lakes Region continues to grow and evolve. Homes and businesses have expanded along major roadways, and many of our communities have experienced dramatic changes. The Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) is an organization established to provide area communities and region with the capability to respond to and shape the pressures of change in a purposeful way. With a service area covering over 1,200 square miles in Belknap, Carroll, Grafton and Merrimack Counties, the LRPC provides a wide range of planning services to member municipalities. The Commission offers direct and support services including technical assistance, geographic information systems, transportation planning, land use, environmental planning, hazard planning and economic development. Local, state, and federal resources primarily fund the LRPC. We also maintain a regular dialogue with state agencies as a resource for the entire Lakes Region. Our overall goal is to provide support, knowledge, and leadership to the governments, businesses, and citizens of the Lakes Region.

Below are some of the focus areas and services provided on behalf of the town of Alton and the region in the past fiscal year:

LOCAL

- ❖ Completed a Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) for the town, in cooperation with the NH Department of Homeland Security.
- ❖ Provided information on area transit upon request from local officials.
- ❖ Reviewed and commented on provisions of the town's zoning ordinance.
- ❖ Initiated a viewshed analysis of the town as to complement the Natural Resource chapter of the town's Master Plan.
- ❖ Distributed many copies of the NH Planning and Land Use Regulation books to member planning boards at considerable savings.
- ❖ Organized and hosted three public Municipal Law Lectures, in cooperation with the NH Local Government Center, where practicing attorneys provide a legal perspective on local planning, zoning, and other municipal issues.

LAND USE

- ❖ Responded daily to requests from local communities for land use, transportation, environmental, and other information and guidance.
- ❖ Prepared master plans, capital improvement programs, zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and related services for several communities.

- ❖ Maintained circuit rider planning services for municipalities interested in assistance with development proposals.
- ❖ Developed a website of electronic documents to facilitate the outreach/education component of the *Innovative Land Use Guide* project, completed by the nine regional planning commissions and the NH Department of Environmental Services.

TRANSPORTATION

- ❖ Developed an update of the top regional transportation priorities, in cooperation with area communities, and submitted them to the NHDOT for review and consideration.
- ❖ Convened several meetings of the LRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to enhance local involvement in transportation planning and project development.
- ❖ Conducted over 160 traffic counts around the region and prepared and updated several local road inventories, on a town-by-town basis, that will be used by the DOT and the municipalities.
- ❖ Presented testimony to the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation to retain all Lakes Region projects in the state's Ten Year Plan.

HOUSING

- ❖ Completed and distributed the 2008 Development Activity in the Lakes Region report on Lakes Region residential and commercial development trends. Prepared and distributed a new development survey for 2008-2009.
- ❖ Staff became qualified by the NH Housing Finance Authority to help communities implement the new Workforce Housing Law.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Awarded \$50,000 from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to prepare a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Lakes Region. An approved CEDS will provide communities with access to EDA funding for infrastructure and economic development projects.
- ❖ Continue to work with area economic development groups including Belknap County Economic Development Council, Grafton County Economic Development Council, Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation, and the Wentworth Economic Development Council.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- ❖ Planned and coordinated the 22nd annual household hazardous waste collection in the Lakes Region with 1,500 households from 23 communities participating at 8 collection sites. An estimated 19,000 total gallons of waste were collected, containerized, and transported to EPA approved end-of-life locations.
- ❖ Continue to provide assistance to the Pemigewasset Local River Advisory Committee.

- ❖ Participated in a number of meetings related to: source water protection, proper disposal of pharmaceuticals and personal care products, low impact development benefits to ground water, and how to implement ground water protection ordinances with municipalities.
- ❖ Continue to represent the region at meetings of the Lakes Region Household Hazardous Product Facility to explore the ways and means the facility may encourage other communities to participate.
- ❖ Created a series of web pages to provide an overview of various energy topics including: solar, geothermal, biomass, wind, and hydro-power.
- ❖ Hosted a training session for Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP) water quality monitors.
- ❖ Received funding assistance from the NH Department of Environmental Services to conduct the first phase of the Lakes Winnepesaukee Watershed Management Plan. Project partners include Lake Winnepesaukee Watershed Association, the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, and the North Country Resource Conservation and Development Area Council.

NATURAL HAZARDS

- ❖ Secured funding from the NH Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) to prepare all hazard management plans for Lakes Region communities.
- ❖ Attended training to prepare local emergency operation plans (LEOP).

REGIONAL CONCERNS

- ❖ Completed an overhaul of the LRPC website, www.lakesrpc.org, added many new features to facilitate access to on-line images for each municipality, recent publications, latest news, etc.
- ❖ Convened six Commission meetings that featured a diverse range of topics: NH Rail Transit Authority, the Downeaster, NH Rail Service, and Next Steps; Viewshed Management and Steep Slope Protection in the Lakes Region; Incentives for Housing, Smart Growth, and Conservation; Transportation Plans/Projects; Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act: Its Future and Current Status.
- ❖ Reviewed project proposals through the NH Intergovernmental Review Agreement having a combined investment total greater than \$55 million in the Lakes Region.